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3 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: DCI Appearance before the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on the National Reconnaissance Organization

1. The DCI appeared before the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (FIAB) in room 297 of the Executive Office Building at 1630 hours on Thursday, 2 April 1964, to explain his views concerning the organization appropriate for the National Reconnaissance Program. In addition to the DCI, there were present Mr. Clifford, the Chairman, General Doolittle, Messrs. Gray, Murphy, Coyne, Pace, Kirkpatrick and Bross, and Drs. Baker, Langer and Land.

2. The Chairman opened the meeting by stating that nobody was satisfied with the current status of the NRO and solicited recommendations for its improvement.

3. The DCI prefixed his remarks by stating that he was speaking in his capacity as Director of Central Intelligence and not as head of the Central Intelligence Agency. The DCI's presentation followed substantially the form and substance of the annexed memorandum. The summary of discussions which follows is keyed to the paragraphs of this memorandum.

3a. USIB. The Chairman asked for an example of lack of control over the program by USIB. The DCI illustrated the problem by referring to the fact that during the summer of 1963 the NRO had scheduled nothing but R&D shots. Action on his part was necessary to readjust the

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schedule to take account of substantive requirements. The Chairman asked whether the role of USIB in the requirements field required restatement. The DCI stated that it did.

Mr. Murphy asked about the basic agreement, pointing out that the document had been executed in its present form. He wanted to know whether it was basically defective, or whether supervening developments had made it obsolete. Would the DCI sign it in its present form again? The DCI replied that he would not and that the agreement was defective, particularly in that some of its provisions had come to be interpreted as making the NRO a line organization. It failed accurately to reflect the proposal which he had originally submitted in a memorandum to the Board approximately a year ago. Mr. Gilpatric and the DCI had understood the arrangement but the agreement did not accurately reflect their understanding.

3b. Manned Aircraft. Mr. Gray asked what the present arrangement with respect to control of covert overflights actually is. He noted that SAC is presently conducting flights in South Vietnam. The DCI stated that this is pursuant to an ad hoc agreement, South Vietnam being almost a theater of war. Accordingly, by negotiations SAC is conducting reconnaissance and establishing a mosaic in support of military requirements. The Chairman wanted to know whether CIA was responsible for covert and the Air Force for overt flights. The DCI said that this was not exactly true. He repeated that the South Vietnam and Cuba operations by the Air Force are flown pursuant to mutual agreement. The situation, in his opinion, requires clarification, and the DCI was simply raising the question as to who should have the basic responsibility. The Chairman asked whether the Air Force would use civilian pilots if the responsibility for covert flights was allocated to them. The DCI suggested that the Air Force could use sheep-dipped

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pilots but that this was a problem. In response to a question from Dr. Langer, the DCI explained the difference between the type of U-2 aircraft used by the Air Force on the one hand, and the equipment used by CIA on the other. The latter has been configured to provide maximum utilization for intelligence collection purposes. Thus, CIA U-2s have been adapted for take-off from carriers, have a capability for greater altitudes, etc. When the Air Force took over responsibility for Cuba, it was necessary to transfer CIA equipment for their use.

c. Development of New Systems, and d. Satellite Operations. A good deal of discussion relates interchangeably to these two paragraphs. General Doolittle asked, in connection with the proposal that there be two organizations for research and development, whether the DCI was talking only about payloads, or whether he had in mind development of entire new systems. The DCI responded that he was talking purely about payloads. The Chairman asked whether two organizations would cost more than one. The DCI indicated that it probably would involve some greater expense which he thought would be thoroughly justified. He went on to explain the differing requirements of CIA and the Air Force which had to a large degree determined the character of the systems for which they are respectively responsible. The Air Force had been interested in quick readout of essentially tactical information and in a high resolution. This had led them to SAMOS, and finally to the development of the GAMBIT program. CIA was more interested in the type of information which results from general search, and this had led to the development of CORONA.

In response to a question from Dr. Land about the advantage which the Air Force has in having completely integrated control from initial development to delivery of the photography, the DCI explained the proposal set forth in paragraph 3d. This calls for operational control of proven systems by a central authority. The Chairman wanted

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to know the Director's reaction to the recommendation that proven systems should be turned over to the Air Force. The DCI indicated that this would be acceptable, indicating later that the operational authority would simply requisition individual payloads for which it would then be responsible operationally.

The DCI explained that there is a gray area between a purely R&D situation and completely proven systems. There is a continuing need for the improvement of existing systems and for this reason the people who know most about the systems should continue to be responsible for them. General Doolittle wanted to know whether the arrangement would involve relations with the individual contractors by both agencies. In the CORONA situation, would the Air Force deal with ITEK on procurement of current payloads, while CIA dealt with ITEK in connection with technical improvement? The DCI said no; it was to avoid this situation that he recommended that procurement should remain with the agency responsible for the system (in this case, CIA). Dr. Land wanted to know how procurement was handled today. The DCI said that originally it was done by CIA but that now it is done by General Greer using CIA technicians seconded to him. Dr. Land wanted to know why this was done. The DCI responded that he didn't know. Dr. Land asked whether he would "undo this" to which the DCI replied that he would.

3d. NRO. The Chairman asked whether the division of authority isn't the reason for all the trouble in the NRO. The DCI said that he thought the kind of division of responsibility which he was proposing would work as the authority of individual agencies would be clearly defined. Mr. Gray wanted to know whether there was any need for an NRO if the Director's recommendation is adopted. Why shouldn't the responsibility be handled through normal agency channels? The DCI stated that he saw a great need

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for an NRO to coordinate the very complex fiscal, research and operational responsibilities involved in the program. There followed some discussion about the allocation of expenses as between the Air Force and CIA and the number of personnel employed by CIA on this program.

The Chairman asked whether the present organization does not make personality difficulties inevitable. The DCI thought that the conflict was attributable to a lack of basic understanding as to whether there would be two organizations or only one. If this problem is settled, most of the problems will disappear. If CIA is phased out, there obviously will be no conflict. On the other hand, if it is recognized that two organizations should continue to function, this decision will be respected and individuals will conform accordingly.

In reply to a question from Mr. Pace, the Director indicated that he could not tell the precise amount of savings which would result from centralization of the program under one authority.

The Chairman asked how the responsibilities for research and development on new systems would be allocated as between the Air Force and CIA. The DCI replied that this would be done by the Secretary of Defense and the DCI jointly. He doubted that an appeal to the President was a likely eventuality.

In reply to a final question, the DCI stated that the 5412 Group plays a very important role in the NRO, particularly in decisions relating to manned aircraft.

/s/ John A. Bross

Attachment
 (BYE-4511)

JOHN A. BROSS
 D/DCI/NIPE

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